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In 1986, Congress passed the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), which established several thousand LEPCs across the United States. These LEPCs were intended to identify chemical hazards, plan for emergencies, convey public information, and include all citizens.

But are the LEPCs working ? Below are some criteria for evaluating a LEPC.

Check each item completed by the LEPC. Items completed:

- ( ) 51 to 60 ..... Outstanding
- ( ) 41 to 50 ..... Good
- ( ) 31 to 40 ..... Progressing
- ( ) 21 to 30 ..... Mediocre
- ( ) 11 to 20 ..... Inadequate
- ( ) 0 to 10 ..... Non-functional

## 1. Goals: Established measurable outcome goals for —

- ( ) reducing accidents ?
- ( ) reducing vulnerability zones and accident potentials ?
- ( ) improving emergency response and mitigation ?
- ( ) established goals for public access to chemical hazards information ?
- ( ) set process objectives (for funding, participation, communication, etc.) And annually evaluated progress toward achieving goals?

## 2. Structure and Process

- ( ) achieved genuinely broad-based and balanced membership ?
- ( ) secured adequate funding sources and professional staffing (through legislation, agency budgets, donations, etc.) ?
- ( ) adopted a mission statement and by-laws ?
- ( ) held regular, well-attended meetings (at least quarterly) ?
- ( ) held formal meetings (advance agenda, written minutes) ?
- ( ) organized active subcommittees and established clear member roles ?
- ( ) maintained policy independence from the host agency ?
- ( ) produced an annual report (covering trends in accidents, hazards, enforcement, drills, site-specific risk reduction, etc.) ?
- ( ) utilized external resources such as other LEPCs and government agencies (e.g., to obtain training materials ?

### **3. Community Hazards Analysis (For facilities with extremely hazardous substances, EHSs)**

- ☐ developed easily understood community maps showing EHS facilities, vulnerability zones, and transportation routes ?
- ☐ obtained needed EHS facility data through questionnaires, site visits, and document requests (using EPCRA 303(d)(3) authority)?
- ☐ obtained EHS facility process hazard analysis (prepared under OSHA's Process Safety Management regulations) ?
- ☐ asked transportation carriers to identify chemicals and volumes moving through the community ?
- ☐ prepared or obtained "worst-case" and lesser release scenarios at each EHS facility and for transportation ?
- ☐ identified critical facilities, vulnerable environments, and potentially exposed populations (e.g., schools, nursing homes, residential areas, workers onsite) ?
- ☐ reviewed hazard analysis with EHS facility managers and workers (including shelter-in-place and evacuation needs) ?
- ☐ established computerized hazards analysis capabilities ?
- ☐ prioritized hazards (e.g., by vulnerability zone) ?

### **4. Emergency Response Planning**

- ☐ submitted a site-specific emergency plan to the State Emergency Response Commission ?
- ☐ exercised the emergency plan and corrected identified weaknesses ?
- ☐ ensured coordination between EHS facilities and fire departments, as well as other response organizations (police, hospitals, etc.) ?
- ☐ sponsored training for fire, medical, police, hazmat teams, and other response personnel ?
- ☐ ensured that hazards analyses are incorporated into fire pre-plans ?
- ☐ established alert and warning systems (and coordinated systems among facilities) ?
- ☐ established means to determine the severity of a release, and the area and population likely to be affected ?
- ☐ planned shelters and evacuation routes ?
- ☐ designated community and facility emergency response coordinators ?
- ☐ maintained an inventory of emergency response resources (equipment, facilities and expertise) ?
- ☐ provided public education on protective actions (evacuation and shelter-in-place) ?
- ☐ evaluated the protective capacity of shelter-in-place structures?
- ☐ acknowledged the limits of emergency response capabilities for protecting people, property, and the environment ?

### **5. Accident Prevention**

- ☐ promoted exploration of inherently safer technologies (involving safer chemicals, lower pressure or temperatures, less storage, fewer shipments, etc.) ?
- ☐ promoted other facility safety improvement (e.g., secondary containment, automatic shutoffs, alarms, etc.) ?
- ☐ provided the community hazard analysis to planning commissions, zoning boards, public works departments, citizen advisory councils, and other local entities ?
- ☐ acquainted facilities with hazard reduction resources (e.g., financing, expertise) ?
- ☐ held seminars for facility personnel, union health and safety committees, etc. ?
- ☐ analyzed spill reports for response and prevention lessons ?
- ☐ publicized lessons learned and best practices ?
- ☐ given public recognition for major hazard reduction efforts (e.g., annual awards) ?

## **6. Community Right-to-Know**

- ☐ publicized availability of right-to-know information ?
- ☐ computerized data for ease of access and analysis ?
- ☐ established a convenient information request process ?
- ☐ provided Tier II chemical storage information as required ?
- ☐ publicized community hazard maps with vulnerability zones through libraries and news media ?
- ☐ publicized options for reducing vulnerable zones (e.g., through safer technologies) ?
- ☐ ensured that meetings are accessible and well-publicized (time , place, publicity) ?
- ☐ worked with communities concerned about specific sites (e.g., through good neighbor agreements) ?

## **7. Enforcement**

- ☐ publicized reporting requirements to covered facilities and transportation carriers ?
- ☐ provided compliance to facilities and carriers ?
- ☐ uncovered and prosecuted non-reporting firms ?
- ☐ pursued beneficial expenditures in settling citizen suits against non-reporting firms ?

## **8. Risk Management Planning**

- ☐ evaluated its own capacity to review hazards and communicate RMP information to the public ?
- ☐ offered compliance assistance to covered facilities ?
- ☐ supported and effective on-line Federal database of complete risk management plans ?
- ☐ prepared to incorporate options for reducing vulnerability zones into public communications ?